(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether it is also a fact that the IOC is bound to follow any such guidelines of district administration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHAJ. PATEL): (a) and (b) In some States, the State Government/District Administration are issuing instructions/ guidelines regarding release of LPG connections and the Oil Marketing Companies have been following the same. Such instructions infer alia include release of new connections on production of ration card, complying with rules falling under trading licence issued by the State Governments, etc.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise in view of reply to (c) above.

Taxes and duties on petroleum products

2695. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government appointed Rangarajan Committee report on petroleum products, does show any discrepancy in the taxes and duties levied in India and the other countries of the Sub-Continent; and

(b) if so, what are the ameliorative measures to fix that problem and thus avoid the escalation in the costs of transport and inputs (High Speed Diesel) in agriculture?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHAJ. PATEL): (a) and (b) The composition of taxes in the retail selling price of Petrol & Diesel in India and the neighbouring countries as given in the Dr. Rangarajan Committee report on pricing & taxation of petroleum products in the sub-continent are as under:

Country	Petrol	Diesel
India	55%	34%
Pakistan	42%	20%
Nepal	31%	22%
Bangladesh	24%	24%
Sri Lanka	37%	5%

The Committee recommended for reducing the customs duty on petrol/ diesel to 7.5% from 10% and shift over in the pricing basis to trade parity in the ratio of 80% import parity and 20% export parity. It also recommended restructuring of excise duty at specific rates on petrol/diesel to avoid cascading effect of increase in selling prices.

Based on the recommendations of Dr. Rangarajan Committee, the Government has reduced the customs duties on petrol & diesel to 7.5% and change in pricing basis to trade parity. These changes have been implemented w.e.f. 16.6.06. Further, Domestic LPG was made "Declared Goods' effective 20.4.2006 resulting in reduction in maximum sales tax to 4%.

Air travel LTC facilities to Government Servants

2696. SHRI MANOHAR JOSHI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have allowed a special dispensation for air travel to Government servants availing LTC to visit J and K State;

(b) whether this dispensation was intended as a past a Government plan to promote tourism in J and K State;

(c) whether Government have assessed the security threat posed to such tourists by the terrorist network in the State;

(d) if so, what steps have been taken for their security and protection; and

(e) whether Government are also considering offering similar dispensation to Government servants availing LTC to visit other parts of country?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) As a part of the Government's plan to revive tourism in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, all Group 'A' and 'B' Government servants were permitted to travel on LTC by Air Economy class in national carrier between New Delhi and Srinagar for a period of two years with effect from 16th June, 2004.

(c) and (d) The State Government and Security Forces, in an endeavour to make the security environment progressively safer for tourists, have taken the following steps:—

(i) A separate tourist police and enforcement wing exists at Srinagar/ Jammu and other tourist places, which looks after and protects the interests of the tourists in the State. The tourist police are